

MARKETING CHALLENGE GRANT GUIDELINES (MCG) - 2012

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Office of Tourism (COT) Marketing Challenge Grant program provides tourism entities with matching marketing funds.

Grant Funding: \$7,500 Minimum; \$50,000 Maximum with a 1-1 Match Required

APPLICATION DEADLINE

MUST BE RECEIVED (NOT POSTMARKED) BY 4:00P.M. ON OR BEFORE MARCH 19, 2012

Projects Period: April 15, 2012 - May 31, 2013

Applicants will be notified of receipt of their application via e-mail within two (2) weeks from the deadline date.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Application Deadline	March 19, 2012
Award Notification	April 2012
Funding Period	April 2012 - May 31, 2013
Project Period	April 15, 2012 - May 31, 2013
Status Report	September 2012 (every 6 months a project is open)
Final Report Due	Within 60 days of completion of the grant period
	Final Financial Report
	Final Evaluation Narrative
State Single Audit (if applicable)	

PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Office of Tourism (COT) Marketing Challenge Grant Program assists non-profit tourism entities in their efforts to promote attractions and events that are open to visitors. COT Marketing Challenge Grant funds are available to tourism entities. The grant program creates a partnership between COT and its constituents, supports promotion of product development and extends COT's tourism's statewide strategic marketing efforts. The Marketing Challenge Grant Program requires a 1-1 match. (See page 3).

The proposed projects considered for funding must have a definable impact on the tourism industry, encourage innovation contribute to the State's vitality and economic health, as well as job development. The following types of projects will receive greater consideration: new or unique projects, projects that encourage tourism visitation to a region rather than a single community, projects that expand existing tourism marketing efforts and projects that ensure extended stays. Applicants that are partners on the proposed project must submit one combined application per project.

All projects should work in synergy with the State's Strategic Marketing Plan for tourism (SMP). and extend the Connecticut brand and images (the Executive Summary is available at www.cultureandtourism.org).

The SMP strives to extend the reach of the state's strategic marketing effort through collaboration and cooperative partnerships with the tourism industries. Projects must articulate compatibility with the SMP.

**PROGRAM
INFORMATION
(CONT'D)**

Project Mock ups: All project materials such as billboard creative, advertisement mock-ups, market research reports for distribution, strategic marketing plan drafts and copy content, etc. must be approved by COT prior to being produced or scheduled for final production. A minimum of five (5) working days is required for this approval.

WHO MAY APPLY

Eligible Applicants

- Tourism, non-profit 501(c)(3), 501(c)(5), 501(c)(6) and municipalities are eligible for the Marketing Challenge Grant Program. Proof of non-profit status is required with the submission of the application. Projects involving partners must have a lead applicant with non-profit status.
- Applicants shall demonstrate a fiscal accountability system that insures that the monies will be spent in the manner indicated by the grant application.
- Applicants should have a marketing plan. Applicants without a marketing plan may complete the Strategic Marketing Questionnaire provided in place of the marketing plan.
- Applicants not incorporated in Connecticut but who do business in Connecticut must have a Certificate of Authority from the office of the Secretary of State. A copy of this form must accompany the application.

Ineligible Applicants (refer to Tourism Grant Overview Guidelines for list)

Eligible applicants may partner with for-profits or other non-profit organizations.

WHAT WE FUND

Eligible Project Expenses

Keep documentation of the expenses of this project as verification for the final report.

Items eligible for funding consideration include but are not limited to:

- **Media Advertising:** Advertising through mass media including online marketing and social networking, newspapers, magazines, out of home, radio and television. Preference for placement should be impacted by tourism targets as stated in the SMP.
- **Direct Marketing:** Direct mail or e-mail to targeted audiences.
- **Promotional Pieces:** Promotional pieces include cost of designing, producing and printing of printed materials (such as brochures, inserts, posters, calendars of events, or other promotional materials). Design and layout costs shall not exceed 25% of the budget. Distribution plan for the promotional piece must be outlined.
- **Production Projects:** Production projects include the production costs of audio/visual video or film presentations to be used in approved advertising and marketing programs.
- **Direct Sales:** Participation in trade shows and/or trade related exhibits to include booth space as outlined by the trade show contract, rental of furniture for booth space, registration fee and literature shipping cost. The registration fee includes the cost to admit one or more participants of the organization to staff a designated booth as outlined by the trade show contract. (Travel expenses, including transportation, hotel accommodations, for one participant qualifies for grant funds.) Hosting tour operators on familiarization tours or trade industry events is an eligible expense.
- **Public Relations:** Public relations projects include costs incurred for the production and distribution of press releases, press kits, preparing of other related materials, and hosting travel writers on familiarization tour or media events.

**WHAT WE FUND
CONT'D**

- **Expansion of Existing Programs:** Expansion of current culture and tourism marketing efforts intended to increase visitation.
- **Online:** Development, design, or promotion, including search engine optimization of a website promoting destination and Connecticut tourism, software related to project, web posting, domain names (10 year maximum), and phone application tours.

COT's TourismMarketing Opportunities may or may not qualify as an eligible expense for this grant program (see grid below for details)

Eligible Expenses Chart for CCT Marketing Opportunities			
<i>Expense</i>	<i>Grant Funds Qualify</i>	<i>Match Funds Qualify</i>	<i>Funds Outside Grant Projects Qualify</i>
Vacation Guide	No	No	Yes
Events Calendar	No	No	Yes
Magazine FSI	No	No	Yes
Online Advertising	Yes	Yes	Yes
CTvisit.com Advertising	No	No	Yes
Market Research Vision Visitor Intercept Tracking	Yes	Yes	Yes
CT Open House Day	No	No	Yes

Ineligible Project Expenses (refer to Tourism Overview Guidelines for additional expenses)

- Feasibility studies.
- Select COT Cooperative Tourism Marketing Opportunities (see above).

Ineligible project expenses cannot be included as project costs; therefore, they cannot be included as part of the grant and match, but grantee may use other revenue to fund these expenses. Check Tourism Overview Guidelines for exceptions.

HOW WE FUND

An approved contract must be in place prior to extending state grant funds. Keep documentation for sources of matching funds and all expenses related to this project for required verification in the Final Report.

Grant Requests:

The minimum COT Marketing Challenge Grant amount is \$7,500 and the maximum is \$50,000.

Matching Funds:

A match of 1-1 is required, as set forth below.

Twenty percent (20%) of matching funds can be in-kind services. Organizations cannot use materials or staff funded by state tax dollars for their in-kind service(s).

The grantee has sixty days (60) days after completion date of the project to submit a final report which includes proof of matching funds. If the grantee has not raised the matching funds, within the prescribed time, all the funds shall be returned to COT.

Matching funds must cover expenses considered eligible under this program. The goal is to raise dollars by creating partnerships with private sector industries.

Eligible Sources of Matching Funds:

(Refer to the the Connecticut Office of Tourism Guidelines page 4)

REVIEW PROCESS

- **Research Programs and Studies:** Research programs and studies designed to stimulate and increase the culture and tourism visitation.
- **Organization and experience:** Applicants will be evaluated based on the quality of their application, history of organization & experience and financial stability. Please depict the credentials of the organization and the pertinent experience points. Place this information in the first section of the narrative.
- **Technical approach:** The second section of the narrative is for identifying the proposed project. **Please clearly state the usage of the grant project dollars.** The applicant must clearly outline objectives and goals of project, including target audience, job development, projected attendance or percentage increase in attendance and lodging room nights impacted by the project. Strategies or messages must be clearly articulated and based on sound research. Tactics to execute the project must be included and should be on target. The project plan must exhibit balance, integration, conciseness, correct approach, be thorough and clear as well as exemplify adequate resources for the grant funded project. Timelines must be clearly defined and reasonable.
- **Consistent with the State's Strategic Marketing Plan for Tourism:** Applicants must clearly articulate compatibility with the degree of enhancement and/or expansion of tourism in Connecticut. Project plans should exemplify creativity, innovation and quality to enhance Connecticut's image; signify economic growth and job development. Project must encourage tourism visitation. Greater consideration will be given to those projects that encourage visitation in a region rather than a single community, as well as those which promote extended stays.
- **Budget:** The project budget must be detailed and complete. Applicants must demonstrate rational tactics in preparing the budget. Costs must be well researched and reasonable, receiving the best value for the proposed budget. Other sources of income must be indicated with a clear delineation of grant and matching dollars. The identified matching funds must be from eligible sources and the expenses must also be eligible.

HOW TO APPLY

The deadline for MCG applications is Monday, March 19, 2012. Applications must be received (not postmarked) in the Constitution Plaza office of DECD/COT by 4:00 pm of this date. If hand-delivered, applicants must request and retain a receipt from the DECD/COT front desk staff person accepting the application, regardless of delivery date. No application or parts thereof will be accepted after the deadline. E-mail or fax submissions will not be accepted.

All mailed applications shall be sent to:

Rena J. Calcaterra, Project Manager
FY12 Marketing Challenge Grant Program
Connecticut Office of Tourism
Department of Economic and Community Development
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

When mailing applications, we strongly suggest using express service or 1-day delivery and retaining the receipt. Applicants will be notified of receipt of their application via e-mail.

Applications for MCG consist of several required forms along with a narrative of two (2) pages, budget, timeline, strategic marketing plan (or completed questionnaire) and support materials (if applicable).

**APPLICATION
MATERIALS**

All applications must:

- Be assembled as directed on the Application Checklist with the “original” application set placed on top of nine (9) copies
- Be signed in blue ink by an authorized official of the organization
- Be single-sided on 8 1/2” X 11” white paper with margins no less than 3/4” on all sides with font no smaller than 11 point
- Include the organization in the upper right hand corner of all pages which are not provided as forms.

Narrative

The narrative is an essential part of the application and provides the most complete picture of the applicant and proposed project. The narrative must be no more than two (2) pages. Address the criteria in the sequence in which they appear. Be sure to address every question; failure to do so will impact the assessment of your application. Include your organization name at the top of each page.

Budget (on separate page - sample is shown on page 7)

A detailed budget is required. Applicants must demonstrate a fiscal accountability system that insures the monies will be spent in the manner in which the grant application package indicates. The Budget shall be one to two pages and must be shown in two sections: Revenue and Expenditures.

- Revenue must be broken down by earned income, grants and contributions and identified source of matching funds.
- Expenses must be broken down by item (media costs, consulting fees) and the expense of each item shown under the appropriate category of revenue: COT Marketing Challenge Grant Funds, matching funds and other revenue. The expense section must clearly denote which funding source is utilized for each item.

Note: The Total Cost of Project refers to the general marketing campaign. This figure may include expenses outside the Marketing Challenge Grant Program.

Timeline (on separate page)

Timeline must be detailed, clearly defines and reasonable. Please indicate significant stages of implementation and approvals for the project. All project materials related to funding and match must be approved by COT prior to being produced or rescheduled for final production. A minimum of 5 working days is required for approval.

Strategic Marketing Plan (or completed questionnaire)

Include copies of your strategic marketing plan or complete the Strategic Marketing Questionnaire.

Applications must include one original (marked original) and nine (9) sets of material in the following order:

Original

1. Application (must be signed in blue ink and dated, with an original signature)
2. Application Narrative (no more than two (2) pages with 11 point font)
3. Project Budget (on a separate page)
4. Timeline (on a separate page)
5. Strategic Marketing Plan or Strategic Marketing Questionnaire
6. Promotional Materials (optional)
7. Sponsorship Opportunities Package (if applicable)
8. Tax Exempt Verification (select what applies; examples listed below)
 - o IRS Tax Exempt Letter (Determination Letter)
 - o Affirmation Letter
 - o Instrumentality Letter

**APPLICATION
MATERIALS CONT'D**

Nine (9) Application sets of Materials (Copies)

1. Application (must be signed and dated, with a copy of the original signature)
2. Application Narrative (no more than two (2) pages with 11 point font)
3. Project Budget (on a separate page)
4. Timeline (on a separate page)
5. Strategic Marketing Plan or Strategic Marketing Questionnaire
6. Promotional Materials (optional)
7. Sponsorship Opportunities Package (if applicable)

Ten (10) sets are required in total to be considered a complete application package.

**GRANTEE
RESPONSIBILITIES**

Please refer to COT Grant Overview Guidelines in particular the sections regarding (pages 4 and 5):

- Grantee Responsibilities
- Credit & Publicity Responsibilities
- Reporting Requirements

**GRANTEE
CANCELLATIONS**

Please refer to page 5 of the COT Grant Overview Guidelines (page 5).

Applicants must follow all instructions and provide accurate and complete information in all sections and supporting materials as stated in the guidelines. Failure to do so will render your application ineligible for review.

Marketing Challenge Grant Budget Sample (XYZ Festival)

Revenue		CT Tourism Challenge Grant		Other Revenue	
Item Description	State Grant	Matching	In-Kind	Other Revenue	Total
CCT Challenge Grant	\$10,000				\$10,000
Corporate Pledges					
XYZ Company		\$3,500			\$3,500
M&M Company		\$2,500		\$800	\$3,300
Memberships					
Proceeds from Gift Shop & Admission Fees		\$1,200			\$1,200
Graphic Company			\$2,000		\$1,500
Graphic Design of Brochure			\$2,000		\$20,800
Total Revenue	\$10,000	\$7,200	\$2,000	\$800	\$20,800
Expenses		CT Tourism Challenge Grant		Other Expenses	
Item Description	State Grant	Matching	In-Kind	Other Expenses	Total
Brochure ABC					
Graphic Design for Brochure	\$1,000				\$2,000
Printing, Inc.					
Printing 20,000 copies 4-color	\$2,500	\$2,500			\$5,000
CTM					
Distribute Brochures	\$2,300	\$1,300			\$3,600
Travel Expenses to trade show		\$900			\$900
Postage	2,000 @ .55	\$500			\$1,000
Entertainment		\$500			\$500
Artist Fees		\$600			\$780
Advertising				\$180	
Graphic Company					
Graphic Design of 2 ads	\$500		\$500		\$1,000
Yankee Magazine&w,"	\$2,100	\$1,100	\$620		\$3,820
May/Sept., 2/14 page, 2 color					
Travel Journal 1/4" Ad 3@ \$765	\$1,100	\$1,100			\$2,200.00
Total Revenue	\$10,000	\$8,500	\$1,500	\$800	\$20,800